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ABSTRACT

Forty-three female college students responded to a 15-statement questionnaire dealing with five areas of role conflict: (1) time management; (2) relations with spouse or boyfriend; (3) expectations for self; (4) expectations of others; and (5) guilt. The problem statements used in the questionnaire were derived from previous research that found "expectations for self" and "time management" to be the areas of greatest role conflict for women. For this sample, "expectations for self" was an area of little concern. Of more concern was the one area of guilt, focusing on the act of not doing what someone else wants done; essentially, a tendency to experience feelings of guilt following assertive behavior. "Time management" was of concern but not to a significant degree. (Author)

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Role Conflicts of College Women

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ABSTRACT

43 female college students responded to a 15 statement questionnaire dealing with five areas of role conflict: 1) time management; 2) relations with spouse or boyfriend; 3) expectations for self; 4) expectations of others; and 5) guilt. The problem statements used in the questionnaire were derived from previous research which found "expectations for self" and "time management" to be the areas of greatest role conflict for women. For this sample, "expectations for self" was an area of little concern. Of more concern was the one area of guilt focusing on the act of not doing what someone else wants done; essentially, a tendency to experience feelings of guilt following assertive behavior. "Time management" was of concern but not to a significant degree.

Role Conflicts of College Women

Role conflict refers to difficulty in conforming to role expectations (Nevill & Damico, 1974). Deutsch (1969) stated that such conflict can take two forms: 1) interpersonal conflict which exists between two or more persons and arises primarily when there is a discrepancy between role expectations and role behavior in that particular individuals may deviate from an expected norm of behavior for a given role and 2) intrapersonal conflict which occurs within the individual. This study was concerned with areas of role conflict expressed by typical female college students, who obviously are enmeshed in a rapidly changing American society. The changing roles of women have thrust many into anxiety-provoking situations where their expectations clash drastically with the role expectations of relatives, friends, and significant others. A typical example might be the employed female who also is a student, wife, and mother, a potentially disturbing situation to many people.

Most of the research dealing with role conflicts has focused on male vocational conflicts, with little directed toward defining the types of role conflicts that women face. Hatch and Hatch (1972) surveyed three leading women's magazines for articles concerned with working married women. Four categories emerged as representing areas of role conflict: 1) the woman, herself; 2) her children; 3) her husband; and 4) finances. In another study, Hall and Gordon

(1973) investigated role involvements and severity of conflicts for women utilizing a questionnaire concerning marital status, work activities, roles and role conflicts, and satisfaction. Three groups were studied: 1) full-time workers; 2) part-time workers; and 3) homemakers. They found that role involvements and conflicts were generally greater for workers than homemakers, although full time workers differed greatly from part-timers and were the most satisfied of the three groups.

Nevill and Damico (1974 & 1975) developed a questionnaire to explore female role conflicts in the following areas: 1) time management; 2) relations with husband; 3) household management; 4) finances; 5) child care; 6) expectations for self; 7) expectations of others; and 8) guilt. These researchers found that the highest levels of stress were reported in the areas of time management and expectations of self.

The purposes of this research were to investigate areas of conflict for college women utilizing a questionnaire based upon the work of Nevill and Damico and also to determine if the results from this undertaking would compare favorably with the findings of these researchers.

Method

Instrumentation: Nevill and Damico (1974) developed a questionnaire to explore female role conflicts, and they identified eight areas. These areas have previously been outlined. A new questionnaire consisting of 15 problem statements and dealing with specific

problems in five of the eight areas was developed. These particular problem statements and areas of conflict were used because they seemed to have more relevance with a broad-based college population. The areas of interest dealt with were: 1) time management; 2) relations with husband or boyfriend; 3) expectations for self; 4) expectations of others; and 5) guilt. Three specific problem statements representing each area were presented to Ss, and Ss were required to respond to each item on a 0-to-10 graduated scale. The number 10 always represented the highest degree of stress, with the number 0 representing little or no stress. The problem statements contained in the questionnaire follow:

<u>These statements dealt with time management</u>:

1. I have enough privacy or time for myself:
   0 1 2 3 4 5 6 7 8 9 10
   Always----------Never

2. I have enough time to keep my household or living quarters looking satisfactory:
   0 1 2 3 4 5 6 7 8 9 10
   Always----------Never

3. I have enough time for my friends and social activities.
   0 1 2 3 4 5 6 7 8 9 10
   Always----------Never

<u>These statements dealt with relationships with spouse or boyfriend</u>:

4. I spend as much time away from my husband or boyfriend as I care to:
   0 1 2 3 4 5 6 7 8 9 10
   Always----------Never

5. I am free to pursue any activities or hobbies that I wish to:
   0 1 2 3 4 5 6 7 8 9 10
   Always----------Never

6. My husband or boyfriend supports me in my activities or interests:
   0 1 2 3 4 5 6 7 8 9 10
   Always----------Never

These statements dealt with expectations for self:

7. I work to my full potential when given a task:
   0 1 2 3 4 5 6 7 8 9 10
   Always----------Never

8. I believe that I have an important role to play in society:
   0 1 2 3 4 5 6 7 8 9 10
   Always----------Never

9. I expect to fulfill my personal goals:
   0 1 2 3 4 5 6 7 8 9 10
   Always----------Never

These statements dealt with expectations of others:

10. Others demand too much of me:
    0 1 2 3 4 5 6 7 8 9 10
    Never----------Always

11. Others expect me to be less than I know I can be:
    0 1 2 3 4 5 6 7 8 9 10
    Never----------Always

12. Meeting someones else's expectations is difficult:
    0 1 2 3 4 5 6 7 8 9 10
    Never----------Always

These statements dealt with guilt:

13. I am so busy with outside activities I neglect my husband or boyfriend:
    0 1 2 3 4 5 6 7 8 9 10
    Never----------Always

14. My interests and activities should be important to others.
    0 1 2 3 4 5 6 7 8 9 10
    Always----------Never

15. I feel bad when I don't do what someone else wants me to do.
    0 1 2 3 4 5 6 7 8 9 10
    Never----------Always

Subjects: Ss were obtained from two general psychology classes at Northern Kentucky University. The 43 female volunteers were all undergraduate students at the University with varied backgrounds. The mean age for the group was 24.05 years, obviously a more mature college group, agewise, than one might typically find. Eleven of the females were married, and 24 were employed on either a full- or

a part-time basis.

Results

The basic datum in the analysis of the questionnaire results was the degree of stress tabulated for each question by each S. The data were initially analyzed by means of an analysis of variance involving several measures on the same individuals (Walker & Lev, 1953). The main effects tested for were differences between the means of individual Ss and differences between the means of the 15 problem statements on the questionnaire (N=43 for each problem statement). The results are presented in Table 1.

Insert Table 1

One can readily see that significant F values were obtained for both of the main effects. The means for individuals differed quite significantly indicating great diversity among the 43 Ss. In order to further investigate these differences, a number of "t" tests were run on the data to determine if there were any trends regarding particular groups of Ss. The mean score for each individual constituted the average obtained from their rated levels of stress across the 15 questions answered. The groups investigated were: 1) Married (N=11) and Single (N=32); 2) College Age (17-22 years; N=16) and older than college age (greater than 22 years of age; N=27); and 3) Working (N=24) and Non-working (N=19). All "t" tests resulted in non-significant values [1) t=1.42, 2) t=.37, and 3) t=.17], indicating no significant differences between the mean levels of reported stress for the three comparisons.

Table 1

Analysis of Variance of Data

Source of Variation	Sum of Squares	Degrees of Freedom	Mean Square	F
Total Group	4,690.50	645		
Between Individuals	690.70	42	16.45	2.84*
Between Questions	583.11	14	41.65	7.18*
Error	3,416.69	589	5.80	

*Significant at the .01 level.

The analysis of variance also resulted in a highly significant F value for the effect "between questions." The means obtained for each of the 15 problem statements were anlyzed to determine which of the differences among these means were significant and which were not. Duncan's new multiple range test (Edwards, 1968) was used and the results are outlined in Table 2. The mean values are ordered

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Insert Table 2

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in a descending manner from right to left, and statement number 15 dealing with the broad area of guilt and statement number 1 dealing with the broad area of time management stand out as areas of role conflict. Table 2 indicates that the mean value of statement 15 is not significantly different from the mean value of statement 1, but number 15 is significantly different from all subsequent means. In particular, this statement deals with possible feelings of guilt which might arise when a woman does not do what someone else wants her to do. Statements dealing with time management (1, 2, and 3) all rank high in Table 2, but they do not differ enough to be of significant value.

In general, the mean scores for all of the problem statements tend to be low, perhaps indicating an overall lack of tension regarding the different areas of role conflict investigation. Of particular interest are the mean values for the three statements dealing with expectations for self (7, 8, and 9). These three statements ranked within the lowest 5 means obtained from the role conflict questionnaire.

Table 2

Duncan's New Multiple Range Test Applied to the Differences Between the Fifteen Questionnaire Means

Questionnaire Problem Statement No.	9	13	7	4	8	11	5	14	10	6	2	3	12	1	15
Means	2.70	2.72	2.91	3.07	3.47	3.65	4.05	4.21	4.26	4.37	4.47	4.56	4.65	5.42	6.00

*Computations were based on the .05 level of significance.

Discussion

The primary goal of this study was to assess the relative importance of several role conflict categories. These categories were derived from the work of Nevill and Damico, and specific problem statements for the appropriate areas were derived from broad definitions given by Nevill and Damico to the role conflict categories of: 1) time management; 2) relationships with husband or boyfrined; 3) expectations for self; 4) expectations of others; and 5) guilt. Overall, the mean scores reported for the 15 problem statements used in the questionnaire tended to be low possibly indicating a lack of stress or conflict regarding most of the areas investigated. The sample used tended to be older than the usual college sample, and perhaps maturity had a hand in this lack of manifested tension. In other words, many in this sample may have experienced stress in the areas investigated but possibly have arrived at meaningful solutions or worked their problems out. Unlike the findings of Nevill and Damico "time management" and "expectations for self" were not found to be the areas of significant stress or conflict for the college women queried. In particular, the means for the three problem statements dealing with the broad area of "expectations for self" ranked with the lowest means and seemed to be of little concern to the Ss dealt with. Of more concern to the college Ss was the one area of guilt focusing on the act of not doing what someone else wants done. In many ways, this amounts to a lack of assertiveness and a tendency to feel guilty following assertive behavior. Also for these same Ss "time management" was of great concern but not to a significant degree.

Contrary to the findings of Hall and Gordon, this study did not find clear distinctions between different groups of women, such as 1) Married/Single; 2) College-Age/Beyond College Age; and 3) Working/Non-Working. These college women seemed to know "where they were and where they hoped to go," but movement toward their goals seems to often lead to feelings of guilt when their goals are different from the expected goals of significant others. This is a very common problem situation for both men and women, but probably more for females as their new and unfamiliar roles in society continue to emerge.

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